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The ovaries of three specimens taken contained eggs as follows: One specimen from Gatun, C. Z., December 19, 1908, twenty-one, yellowish, spherical eggs,  $\frac{5}{8}$  of an inch in diameter; one specimen from Gatun, C. Z., February 14, 1909, forty-one, white, ellipsoidal eggs,  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches long and  $\frac{7}{8}$  of an inch in diameter; one specimen from Gatun, C. Z., March 5, 1909, forty-three, white, ellipsoidal eggs,  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches long and  $\frac{7}{8}$  of an inch in diameter. When the females are carrying eggs, they are extremely sluggish and can be easily approached.

In the meat markets of Panama, the live iguanas with their hind legs tied together are offered for sale in large numbers, as are also the eggs.

THOMAS HALLINAN,  
*Paterson, New Jersey.*

### THE MATING OF WATER SNAKES

In the month of May I was fishing along the northern bank of Towanda Creek, in the village of Canton, Pa. A branch of a bush on the southern bank, about thirty feet away, began shaking vigorously at intervals of two or three seconds. I watched it closely, expecting to see a bird, but was surprised to see instead the outline of a snake, which appeared to be having a series of periodic spasms. It was not convenient to cross at that point to investigate, so I continued fishing down-stream. A half-mile below I observed the same phenomenon in a bush on my side of the stream.

Stalking very slowly, I approached within six feet of the bush, which overhung the water. On one branch was stretched a snake, apparently three feet long or a little more, and perhaps one and one-half inches in diameter at the thickest part. I recognized it as being what is called in that region a common water snake.\*

Upon her, with a portion of his tail wrapped about her, lay a smaller snake of the same species. At intervals of three to five seconds, one or both—I could not distinguish which—appeared to contract violent-

\**Natrix sipedon*—Ed.

ly, shaking the bush to such an extent that the leaves rustled as they do when agitated by the wind.

Other snakes of the same kind were crowded together farther down the bush. They were in such a confused mass that I could not count them, but I believe there were at least six. All seemed to be of about the same size as the smaller of the first pair I had observed.

Presently the convulsions of the pair on the outer end of the bush ceased. The smaller snake slowly disengaged himself and joined the bunch below. His place was taken quickly by another and the convulsions began again. One after another, the smaller snakes paid their respects to the largest one, which I believe was a female.

In the meantime, another little drama was being enacted on the side and I watched that also. Another water snake, about the same size as the small ones in the bush, came crawling along the bank, seemingly in a hurry.

As he reached the base of the bush he seemed about to mount it; but he caught sight of me and stopped abruptly. Then he began stalking me. He came on by inches, watching me closely. I stood as still as possible. He was a magnificent specimen—clean, brilliant, supple. About a foot from my shoe he stopped. So far he seemed in doubt as to my identity. But all of a sudden he made up his mind. Turning like a flash, he slid off into the water and was gone.

Feeling a little stiff in the joints, I looked at my watch. A rapid calculation showed me that I had stood without consciously moving a muscle for an hour and seventeen minutes. The party in the bush was still going on. I strode up and stamped on the ground. Precipitately the snakes all plunged into the creek.

ARMSTRONG PERRY,  
*Douglaston, N. Y.*